



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

December 2014



Recreation Report

Little Deer Project

**Goosenest Ranger District, Klamath National Forest
Siskiyou County, California**

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Executive Summary

Methodology

An assessment of the effects of Little Deer project activities on recreation was conducted using field and office review, professional expertise, and on-the-ground knowledge.

Analysis Indicators

Analysis indicators used to determine the effects of alternatives on recreation include:

1. Recreation use— increases, decreases or remains the same.
2. Recreation Opportunities—increase, decrease, or remain the same.

Spatial and Temporal Context

The spatial scale for analysis of the effects to recreation is the Little Deer project area because project activities will have direct effect on recreational use and opportunities. The temporal scale defines short-term effects defined as three years or less and long-term effects of ten years or longer because within this time period there will be visual change of vegetative growth and deer browse value will have.

Affected Environment

Recreational use in the project area is very low and consists of dispersed recreation opportunities. Dispersed recreation opportunities include primitive camping, hunting, woodcutting, viewing scenery. Although no primitive camping sites are located within the project area, five dispersed campsites are located immediately adjacent to northern boundary of the area. There is some all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use in the area, primarily in association with deer hunting.

Woodcutting is a popular recreation activity in the project area; ponderosa pine and cedar burned in the recent fire are readily available for fuelwood cutting. Wood cutters are currently permitted to take ponderosa pine and cedar if they are standing dead or down logs and are allowed to remove them if they are adjacent to Forest roads or laying on the ground. Wood cutters may cut and travel off open National Forest system roads 100 feet to load wood.

Viewing scenery in and of the project area, primarily from roads or viewpoints overlooking the area such as lookouts, is another popular recreation activity. Scenery, and the effect of the project on scenery, is discussed in the scenery section of this document and the Scenery resource report.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

Under alternative 1, current management plans will continue to guide management of the project area. There will be no project-related treatments. Overall, recreation use and opportunities will remain unchanged. There will be no direct or indirect effects.

Cumulative Effects

As there are no direct or indirect effects, there are no cumulative effects.

Alternative 2

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

The operational impacts from the project activities such as traffic, noise, smoke, and dust are short-term adverse impacts to recreationists but will be temporary in nature.

An indirect beneficial effect to recreation will be designated firewood areas totaling 87 acres. This alternative will allow access up to two years after project implementation on a temporary road on an existing road bed and allow cross country travel within stands 719-64, 719-95, and 719-96. This access will cause a short-term increase in recreational firewood cutting within the project area.

Alternative 2 proposes 512 acres of planting and seeding of brush and grasses throughout 1,463 acres outside dead tree removal units and the inter-planting of these species on 490 acres within the reforestation units. This replanting will be an indirect beneficial effect to recreation because there will be a long-term increase in forage for deer populations and use of the area (as described in the Wildlife resource report); thus improving the quality of deer hunting in the project area.

A project design feature blocking access to temporary roads and skid trails upon project completion will prevent unauthorized public travel off system roads.

Meeting or exceeding Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) for all management areas will protect recreation settings and thus meet Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classes for all management areas.

Changes in stand structure after project implementation may result in some changes in recreational use patterns but will not impact recreational opportunities. There is no reason to expect recreation use to measurably increase or decrease as a result of this alternative.

Cumulative Effects

Adding the effects of alternative 2 to those of the reasonably foreseeable future actions noted in appendix C will not have a substantial effect on recreation use or opportunities.

Alternative 3

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

Since there will be no open access designated for firewood in this alternative, woodcutting will be limited to existing woodcutting permit regulations. Current permits allow retrieval of firewood 100 feet off of open Forest system roads; therefore recreational woodcutting is not likely to increase with this alternative.

Alternative 3 proposes the replanting shrubs and native grasses on 399 acres within dead tree removal units; this will have an indirect beneficial effect to recreation by increasing the forage for deer populations and use of the area within these units. Opportunities for harvesting deer will increase in the project area.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects on recreation of adding the effects of alternative 3 to the effects of reasonably foreseeable future actions are the same as for alternative 2.

Comparison of Effects

Table S- 1: Comparison of effects to recreation by alternative

	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Proposed Action as Modified)	Alternative 3
Recreation Use	No effect to overall recreation use	Direct short-term adverse effect from smoke, road closures, or increased traffic during project implementation. Indirect short-term increase in overall recreation use from firewood cutting areas (87 acres)	Direct short-term adverse effect from smoke, road closures, or increased traffic during project implementation. No designated firewood cutting areas
Recreation Opportunities	No effect	Indirect long-term beneficial effect to deer hunting opportunities from replanting (up to 3,425 acres)	Indirect long-term beneficial effect to deer hunting opportunities from replanting (1,558 acres)

Compliance with law, regulation, policy, and the Forest Plan

Action alternatives in this project will help achieve the desired conditions to perpetuate ecologically established scenery, minimize visible disturbances from the Forest Plan (meet Forest Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs)), and maintain existing recreation opportunities. Integration of scenery and recreation project design features insures this project is consistent with Forest Plan standards and moves toward scenery and recreation desired conditions.

Recreation Resource Report

Methodology

A recreation assessment of project activities was conducted using field and office review, professional expertise, and on-the-ground knowledge.

Analysis Indicators

Analysis indicators used to determine the effects of alternatives on recreation include:

1. Recreation use - increases, decreases or remains the same.
2. Recreation Opportunities - increase, decrease, or remain the same.

Spatial and Temporal Context

The spatial scale for analysis of the effects to recreation is the Little Deer project area because project activities will have a direct effect on recreational use and opportunities. The temporal scale defines short-term effects as three years or less and long-term effects of ten years or longer because within this time period there will be visual change of vegetative growth and browse value will have stabilized for deer.

Affected Environment

Recreational use in the project area is very low and consists of dispersed recreation opportunities. “Dispersed recreation is outdoor recreation that involves relatively low density use and occurs over broad expanses of land and water“. Dispersed recreational activity accounts for 80 percent of Forest recreational use. Most dispersed activity occurs during the summer and fall months. All dispersed areas are currently managed at low standard levels.” (Forest Plan, page 3-12)

Dispersed recreation opportunities include primitive camping, hunting, woodcutting, viewing scenery. Five dispersed campsites (57D071, 57D071A-D) are located immediately adjacent to northern boundary of the project area off of National Forest road 70 and are depicted on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Some All - Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use is also in the area, primarily in association with deer hunting.

Woodcutting is a popular recreation activity on the Goosenest Ranger District, with lodgepole as the preferred woodcutting species. Although there is no lodgepole within the project area, there are ponderosa pine and cedar burned in the recent fire that are readily available. Wood cutters are currently permitted to take ponderosa pine and cedar if they are standing dead or down logs and are allowed to remove them if adjacent to Forest roads or laying on the ground. Wood cutters may cut and travel off open Forest system roads 100 feet to load wood.

Scenery is an important component that affects recreation use, setting, and the recreation experience. Viewing scenery in and of the project area occurs primarily from roads or viewpoints overlooking the area such as lookouts. See Scenery report for detailed analysis of the effects of the project on scenery.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, current management plans will continue to guide management of the project area. There will be no treatments. In the no action alternative, overall recreation use and opportunities will remain unchanged. There will be no direct or indirect effects.

Cumulative Effects

As there are no direct/indirect effects, thus there are no cumulative effects.

Alternative 2

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

The operational impacts from the project activities such as traffic, noise, dust, and smoke are short-term adverse impacts to recreationists, but will be temporary in nature.

An indirect beneficial effect to recreation will be designated firewood areas (719-64, 719-95, 719-96) totaling 87 acres, which will cause a short-term increase in recreational use.

Alternative 2 proposes replanting of up to 3,425 acres of planting and seeding of brush and grasses outside Dead Tree Removal Units and the inter-planting of these species within the reforestation units. This replanting will be an indirect beneficial effect to recreation because there will be a long-term increase in forage for deer populations and utilization of the area (as described in the wildlife resource report); thus improving the quality of the deer hunt in the project area.

A project design feature blocking access to temporary roads and skid trails upon project completion will prevent unauthorized public travel off system roads.

Meeting or exceeding Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) for all management areas will protect recreation settings and thus meet Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classes for all management areas.

Cumulative Effects

Changes in stand structure after project implementation may result in some changes in recreational use patterns, but will not impact recreational opportunities. There is no reason to expect recreation use to measurably increase or decrease as a result of this alternative.

Alternative 3

Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

There will be no areas designated for firewood.

Alternative 3 proposes the replanting of 1,558 acres, which will have an indirect beneficial effect to recreation by increasing the forage for deer populations and utilization of the area; thus improving the quality of the deer hunt in the project area.

Cumulative Effects

All of the recreation effects are the same as Alternative 2.

Comparison of Effects

Recreation effects are displayed by alternative in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Recreation Comparison of Effects of Alternatives

	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 (Proposed Action as Modified)	Alternative 3
Recreation Use	No effect to overall recreation use	Direct short-term adverse effect from smoke, road closures, or increased traffic during project implementation. Indirect short-term increase in overall recreation use from firewood cutting areas (87 acres)	Direct short-term adverse effect from smoke, road closures, or increased traffic during project implementation. No designated firewood cutting areas
Recreation Opportunities	No effect	Indirect long-term beneficial effect to deer hunting opportunities from replanting (up to 3,425 acres)	Indirect long-term beneficial effect to deer hunting opportunities from replanting (1,558 acres)

Compliance with law, regulation, policy, and the Forest Plan

This project will help achieve the Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) of 1995 desired conditions to perpetuate ecologically established scenery, minimize visible disturbances (meet Forest Visual Quality Objectives(VQOs)), and maintain existing recreation opportunities. Integration of scenery and recreation project design features insures this project is consistent with Forest Plan scenery and recreation desired conditions.

Literature Cited

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